

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A friction stir welding method, comprising:
butting two members together, a gap being formed therebetween;
welding areas of the gap formed at the butted portion where the gap exceeds a first size, the welding filling the gap where the gap exceeds the first size; and
after the welding, performing friction stir welding along the joint line including the areas welded.

2. (original) A friction stir welding method according to claim 1, wherein said welding is performed to all the joint lines to which said friction stir welding is to be performed.

3. (currently amended) A friction stir welding method according to claim 1 ~~[[2]]~~, wherein:

a rotary tool used for said friction stir welding comprises a smaller diameter portion to be inserted to the welding area, and a larger diameter portion, than the smaller diameter portion, to be positioned outside the welding area, a boundary being provided between the smaller and larger diameter portions; and

said friction stir welding is performed with the boundary between said smaller

diameter portion and said larger diameter portion being positioned within a nugget protruding from surfaces of said members formed during said welding step.

4. (currently amended) A method for manufacturing a car body, comprising:
welding the areas of a gap exceeding a first [[value]] size formed at a butted portion between an underframe and side structures or the butted portion between the side structures and a roof structure, said welding filling said areas of the gap exceeding the first size; and

after the welding, performing friction stir welding along the joint line including the areas welded.

5. (new) A method for manufacturing a car body according to claim 4, wherein:
a rotary tool used for said friction stir welding comprises a smaller diameter portion to be inserted to the welding area, and a larger diameter portion, than the smaller diameter portion, to be positioned outside the welding area, a boundary being provided between the smaller and larger diameter portions; and

said friction stir welding is performed with the boundary between said smaller diameter portion and said larger diameter portion being positioned within a nugget, protruding from surfaces at the butted portion, formed during said welding step.

6. (new) A method for manufacturing a car body according to claim 5, wherein said welding is arc-welding.

7. (new) A method for manufacturing a car body according to claim 4, wherein said welding is arc-welding.

8. (new) A method for manufacturing a car body according to claim 4, wherein said welding is performed continuously along the joint line.

9. (new) A method for manufacturing a car body according to claim 4, wherein said welding is performed using a filling material, with the gap being filled with the filling material during the welding.

10. (new) A method for manufacturing a car body according to claim 4, wherein said welding provides a weld having sufficient strength such that during said friction stir welding the butted portion is not parted.

11. (new) A friction stir welding method according to claim 3, wherein said welding is arc-welding.

12. (new) A friction stir welding method according to claim 1, wherein said welding is arc-welding.

13. (new) A friction stir welding method according to claim 1, wherein said welding is performed continuously along the joint line.

14. (new) A friction stir welding method according to claim 1, wherein said welding is performed using a filling material, with the gap being filled with the filling material during the welding.

15. (new) A friction stir welding method according to claim 1, wherein said welding provides a weld having sufficient strength such that during said friction stir welding the butted portion is not parted.